

Wallops: Moving Forward

For nearly 70 years, Wallops has been an integral member of the Eastern Shore community. You've shared in our vast successes over the years and you've stood with us during the tough times as well. The Antares rocket failure last week was a reminder that space flight is hard. Still, there's a lot of momentum here at Wallops and that momentum continues to move us forward.

Wallops has an incredibly diverse mission set. As I write this, our sounding rocket program is prepping for a launch out of White Sands, scheduled for Nov. 6, along with two launches in Norway planned later this month. The balloon program office is deployed to Antarctica for three flights while actively preparing to fly from New Zealand next spring. Our aircraft office is anxiously awaiting the return of our P-3B, which is receiving a new set of wings in preparation for many, many more years of enabling scientific investigations.

New business continues to pour into the facility, with unmanned aerial vehicle test flights planned, exciting work with small satellites underway, along with ongoing work with Global Precipitation Measurement (GPM) ground validation. Also, the critical missions of our partners, such as the U.S. Navy's Surface Combat Systems Center and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Command and Data Acquisition Station, further underscore the diversity of our facility.

As our core lines of business move forward, the Wallops Range, Virginia Space, and our commercial launch partner, Orbital Sciences Corp., are tackling the herculean task of returning to launch. Officials with the Mid-Atlantic Regional Spaceport are assessing Pad 0A, which thankfully was largely spared in the mishap. Orbital has convened an accident investigation board — overseen by the Federal Aviation Administration and supported by NASA — and is poring through data, photo/video, and physical evidence to identify the root cause of the Antares failure. I have every bit of confidence that the team will get to the root cause, correct it, and keep moving forward. What we learn will make our



Dan Givens, Orbital Sciences' Antares field site manager at Wallops, and Bill Wrobel, Wallops Flight Facility director, survey damage at Pad 0A Friday, Oct. 31. Updates on the ongoing investigation into the Antares mishap Oct. 28 can be found at www.orbital.com.

entire launch program even stronger.

As we continue the mission and work to return Antares and MARS to launch, I'm heartened by the outpouring of support from our elected leaders at all levels of government, our stakeholders, regional partners, and our community closer to home. Thank you for standing together with us as we move forward.

In the aftermath of last week's Antares failure and the tragic accident of Virgin Galactic's SpaceShipTwo, we are reminded of how challenging this business is and how unforgiving it can be. People don't get into this line of work because it's easy; the obstacles are many in an environment fraught with adversity and unknowns. But, at NASA we've always taken on the toughest challenges, and it's the intrinsic rewards in overcoming those challenges and making a difference in our everyday lives, our Earth and beyond that keep us moving forward. The men and women of Wallops and all our mission partners are proud to have served the region for 70 years and we look forward to the ongoing pursuit of the dreams and discoveries that lie ahead.

— *Bill Wrobel, Director, Wallops Flight Facility*